

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4008
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INFO USMISSION USNATO
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, BE
SUBJECT: MOD VANDEN BOEYNANTS REPLIES FURTHER TO
SOCIALIST CRITICISM OF HELIP

REF: BRUSSELS 18910

1. MINISTER OF DEFENSE VANDEN BOEYNANTS, NEVER ONE TO
PERMIT HIS CRITICS THE LAST WORD, HAS AGAIN WRITTEN TO
THE SOCIALIST DAILY, LE PEUPLE. HIS LETTER, PUBLISHED
ON DECEMBER 28, SUPPLEMENTED HIS PREVIOUS DEFENSE OF HIS
PRO-HELIP POSITION (REFTEL) AND COVERED THE FOLLOWING
GROUND:

(A) ALL MILITARY HEADQUARTERS, BELGIAN AND OTHERS,
AGREE ON THE VALUE OF HELIP AS EFFECTIVE AGAINST ALL
AIRCRAFT WITHIN ITS RADIUS OF ACTION FROM HIGH ALTITUDE
TO ALTITUDES BELOW 150 METERS. "WHERE THE RADAR CAN SEE,
THE MISSILE CAN GO."

(B) HELIP HAS A VERY SHORT REACTION TIME PERMITTING
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IT TO ENGAGE AIRCRAFT HIDDEN BY TERRAIN FEATURES UNTIL
THE LAST MOMENT.

(C) HELIP BATTERIES PROVIDE MUTUAL PROTECTION BY
HAVING OVERLAPPING ZONES OF ACTION.

(D) AIRCRAFT WOULD BE OBLIGED TO FLY LOWER AND LOWER

(TO ESCAPE HELIP) AND THUS EXPOSE THEMSELVES TO LOCAL AAA WEAPONS, WHICH ARE NUMEROUS AND COMPLEMENT HELIP.

(E) HELIP, LIKE NIKE AND AIRCRAFT, DO NOT GUARANTEE THE INTERCEPTION OF TACTICAL MISSILES, BUT THAT IS NOT ITS PURPOSE. HELIP WAS DESIGNED AS AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT SYSTEM AND NOT AN ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEM, WHICH UNFORTUNATELY DOES NOT EXIST.

(F) THE VALUE OF NATO'S ANTI-AIRCRAFT SYSTEM, MADE UP OF HAWK AND NIKE BATTERIES, CANNOT BE QUESTIONED. THIS ANTI-AIRCRAFT BARRIER IS THE BEST AVAILABLE MEANS OF DISSUASION AVAILABLE TO WESTERN EUROPE AGAINST AERIAL ATTACK. IT IS A PURELY DEFENSIVE WEAPON AND SERVES AS ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL GUARANTEES OF PEACE.

(G) IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO GO AROUND THIS ANTI-AIRCRAFT BARRIER WHICH EXTENDS FROM DENMARK TO AUSTRIA AND IS MORE THAN 200 KILOMETERS DEEP.

(H) THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT BARRIER PROTECTS THE MILITARY UNITS IN ITS ZONE IMMEDIATELY UPON THE OPENING OF HOSTILITIES, INCLUDING OUR (BELGIAN) SOLDIERS WHO ARE STATIONED THERE.

(I) WE WOULD MAKE THIS BARRIER INOPERABLE BY NOT
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MODERNIZING OUR HAWK UNITS.

(J) AS TO THE ECONOMIC COMPENSATIONS, I HAVE ALREADY SAID AND I REPEAT THAT THESE WILL BE AT LEAST AS GOOD AS THOSE WE MIGHT HAVE RECEIVED HAD BELGIUM PARTICIPATED IN HELIP WITH OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES SINCE 1974.

2. COMMENT: VANDEN BOEYNANTS' LATEST LETTER TO THE SOCIALIST DAILY SERVED HIS PURPOSE. IT WAS CARRIED WITHOUT CRITICISM, WITH THE SOLE COMMENT THAT VANDEN BOEYNANTS S BECOMING ONE OF OUR MOST FAITHFUL CORRESPONDENTS." CHAMBERS

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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